

England. - Army Appendix ⁵ _k 2.

OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
PREVAILING ABUSES
IN THE
BRITISH ARMY,
ARISING FROM THE
CORRUPTION of CIVIL GOVERNMENT.
WITH A
PROPOSAL to the OFFICERS
towards obtaining an Addition to their Pay.

By the Honourable * * * — an Officer.

Si omnes volumus, quod arguimur, non distinguimus voluntatem a facto : Omnes plectamur. TIT. LIV. lib. xlv.

L O N D O N,

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OBSEVATIONS

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OBSERVATIONS, &c.

THERE is no task more difficult than to combat, with success, abuses of long standing; they borrow the appearance of right from immemorial custom, and it is almost impossible to rouse men to acute feelings of sufferings and oppressions, of which they themselves have not seen, or felt the beginnings.

But evils are still more insurmountable, when their removal demands a steady and prompt unanimity, in extensive communities. The various interests and opinions of men defeat the completion of this most powerful engine of human force; and

great reformati^ons are consequently either the fruits of long, and often frustrated labours, or the birth of fortunate accidents.

There may be, perhaps, two causes of the many feeble, ill-concerted, and worse supported attempts, towards an augmentation of the pay of the British troops, which seem now to be so submissively, or indolently laid aside, and the grievance, with many others, so patiently supported, that to offer new proposals on the subject, cannot but carry with it the air of quixotism.

But as attempts that have been deemed unwarrantable from improbability of success, have often been found to be very easy on trial, and their apparent difficulties to be only the bugbears of irresolution, ardent enterprising spirits are sometimes eminently useful as pioneers to regular and sober

ber industry ; men who have virtue and talents for executing work which is put into their hands, have not always fertile and progressive inventions, but treat every thing as impossible and chimerical, which presents any glaring difficulties ; and the world would stand still, and every species of improvement be at an end, if nature did not provide another set of men, of irritable and restless dispositions, fretful under grievances, and ambitious of being the instruments of public advantage.

It is this disposition and perhaps this ambition, which lead me to address myself to the officers of the British army ; to demonstrate to them how shamefully, from the present miserable establishment of their pay, and other glaring abuses, they are cut off from their share in the prosperities of Great Britain ; to shew to them, how far this insulting misfortune is owing to their

absurd neglect of their own advantages, and to endeavour to rouse them to a spirited, yet constitutional demand of the just rights of her most useful and laborious citizens.

At first view, this may appear to be a dangerous subject, and highly incompatible with the arbitrary principles of military government. What is termed Remonstrance in a citizen, is supposed to be Mutiny in a soldier; but mutiny, I apprehend to be confined to the breach of discipline and subordination in an inferior, towards a superior in military command. Soldiers do not give up their general rights as members of a free community; they are amenable to civil and municipal laws, as well as to their own martial code, and are therefore entitled to all the privileges with which a free form of government invests every individual: nay, it is to their virtue, that

that all the other parts of the community must ultimately trust for the enjoyment of their peaceable privileges. For as Mr. Pitt (now Lord Chatham), in his strong figurative eloquence expressed himself in parliament, "To the
 " virtue of the army we have hither-
 " to trusted ; to that virtue, small as
 " the army is, we must still trust ; and
 " without that virtue, the lords, the
 " commons, and the people of Eng-
 " land may intrench themselves be-
 " hind parchment up to the teeth, but
 " the sword will find a passage to the
 " vitals of the constitution."

There is nothing really dangerous in this seemingly alarming truth. The people of England have been often imposed upon by dark and designing men, to regard the army with a jealous and malignant eye, as the surly tool of arbitrary power, and the foe of liberty. The faults of individuals

viduals have been unthinkingly charged on the whole body, and the execution of civil justice too often requiring the support of military force (the most hateful and reluctant duty of an English soldier), has sown the seeds of discord and suspicion between two branches of the community, equally necessary and respectable; between the law and its protectors, between the people and their brethren and defenders. But notwithstanding this jealousy so much to be lamented, there is nothing reasonably to be feared from a standing army of double the number of the present. The army is, I believe, as zealous for the real prosperity and freedom of Great Britain, as any other collective body in the nation; it is by her own corrupt representatives, that the axe has been laid to the root of her liberties.—It is in the senates, and not the barracks, of

of the kingdom, that the pillars of the constitution have been shaken—It is from thence that the people have suffered—it is from thence that the army has been oppressed.

The great and principal reason why the deaf ear has still been presented to the petitions of the army, is, because no disagreeable consequences have resulted from the neglect of them. Parliament sees, equally with ourselves, the justice and urgency of our expectations; the legislators of Great Britain know very well, that the officers in the army cannot support that appearance which is expected from gentlemen, and that the whole establishment of the pay is mean and scandalous; but we have never proved to them that it is requisite in policy to redress these grievances; we have trusted alone to the force of truth and justice, which seldom have pleaded successfully

cessfully in any public assembly of men, unless necessity and interest supported them; and so far are these from being our advocates in the present case, that our own folly turns them as arguments and weapons against us.

I need not inform the gentlemen of the army, nor indeed the public in general, that, except in regiments stationed in remote and noxious climates, a vacancy of even an ensigncy for purchase, is seldom without more than one candidate, although the pay is little more, in proportion to the purchase money, than what the same sum, sunk in a safe fund, would annually procure, without the obligation of service, or the slavery of subordination. The progressive steps must now almost in every instance be severely purchased on the same disadvantageous terms as the first, and even then are seldom procured but with

with greater difficulty, and more stretch of what is styled parliamentary interest, than would raise a gentleman to opulence and independence in any other pursuit, or profession; and when the top of the ladder is gained, the emoluments bear no proportion to the expences inseparable from military parade, or even to the common necessities and comforts of life. No respect is gained, no honour reflected, and no weight, or consideration is acquired in the country; nevertheless the standards are flocked to with tumultuous emulation.

When infatuation thus prevails over common sense, and the vanity of youth is sowing thorns for the pillow of age; when the glitter of a brass gorget effaces even the solid lustre of gold; and the fash, that too just emblem of an empty purse, is preferred to the scarf, or toga, is it

wonderful that parliament should not redress the grievances of the army? is it wonderful that men, who have forced themselves by corruption into the chair of authority, should not throw the spoils from them, on the heads of men who are not even looking for them?

Places and pensions multiply yearly in such an astonishing ratio, that, without a sudden stop, nay a radical cure of these running sores of corruption, not only the pay of the army must remain unaugmented, but in time the army must be disbanded. G——t is at present in the situation of a hard drinker: when wine, from inordinate use, becomes too cold for the stomach, he flies to rum, from rum to brandy, and thus runs the climax through all the stages of fermentation. The powerful cordials of state which were not formerly administered
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except on urgent occasions, are now become the habitual regimen of every senator. A member of the H--- of C--- can no more live without a place, or pension, than a peeress without her maccaroni, or a chambermaid her perquisites. The traders observe this, and raise the prices of their commodities ; the money-dealers lower the interest of their funds ; the manufacturers double the wages of their labour ; the husbandman refuses to plough the land, and the mariner the sea, till the farmer and the merchant keep up the proportion between the value of money and the necessities of life. The soldier alone, with hollow eye and haggard cheek, smiles contented on his scarlet, hated by the populace as the supposed tool of despotism, yet neglected by government as the voluntary and unworthy slave.

The crown indeed very wisely avails itself of the spirit, or rather folly of the times ; and as a nurse with a bad breast of milk hushes a starving infant with a rattle, it rings all the changes on buckram and buttons, and buttons and buckram, to please the warriors of Blackheath and Wimbledon, and to spread wider the contagion of the *scarlet fever*, which is nearly synonymous with the *goal distemper*.

To enter into a detail of the taxes, which the progress of luxury and the advancement of commerce have laid on the decencies and necessities of life since the establishment of the army was formed, would not only be tediously needless, to such as are acquainted with the history of Great Britain, but to persons of all denominations ; who from their own memories can draw
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sufficient comparisons, to make a striking estimate of the situation of military officers, more especially in the subaltern ranks of the profession. It may however be proper to remark, that since the above mentioned period, two new worlds, the sources of almost all the delicacies of nature, and the enchantments of luxury, have, like two immense torrents, overwhelmed the commercial nations of Europe, swept away the very traces of œconomy and simplicity of manners, and so metamorphosed the face and appearance of things, that could our forefathers arise from the mansions of the dead, they would be at a loss to recognize either their country or their children. The sober sons of industry, apparelled and fed by the manufactures and productions of England, supported by staffs, the growth of her native woods, now glitter in the borrowed

rowed plumes of Asia and America, grow wanton with her spices and confections, and roll along the broadened ways in gilded chariots. The emigrants return in multitudes from the other hemisphere, laden with the spoils of murder, barbarity, and desolation, mount into the seats of honour, and stamp the sterling mark on vice and extravagance.

Whatever is for a while upheld by the authority of universal custom, soon interweaves itself with nature, and is considered as one of her innate demands. The expensive commodities of the two Indies, and the hourly births of inventive pride and prodigal sensuality, stand in this delusive predicament. The want of them cannot be atoned for by the most exemplary virtue, or the most public utility. There is no resource in the funds of human wisdom and

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resolution to withstand the tyranny of fashion. All the actions and opinions of mankind are whirled round in this irresistible vortex; the most noble and virtuous minds are the most strongly susceptible of even a false sense of shame; sensibility, the constant companion of worth, is too tremblingly awake to be composedly happy under the unmerited contempt of even despicable objects. Hence the pangs of poverty have been felt most acutely, where the gnawings of hunger and the cold of nakedness have scarce made any impression; these corporeal sufferings bear no proportion to the keen sensations of honest minds, when their birth and situation are not the open passports of their distress. The labourer, whom disease or idleness has reduced to indigence, demands the poor-rates in his parish, or, trusting to the eloquence of misery, throws himself

himself into the haunts of men, and subsists on the tribute of compassion; he feels no shame in the importunities of beggary, the cravings of nature are his only sufferings, and from these he is soon relieved; for to the eternal honour of Great Britain, the rich are in a manner the stewards of providence for the protection of the poor.

But the horrors of indigence in the higher walks of life are of a different kind, and are much more deplorable. They are such as should never be felt, but as the scourges of indolence, or the retribution of dishonesty: it is a disgrace to the government, and to the nation, where poverty is the squalid associate of the most laborious of the public servants who live within the pale of death for the defence of their country; give up all the happy rights of free men, and, for the common cause, subject them-

themselves voluntarily to a government, compared with which, even Turkey is a republic.

Officers in the army, even in the most subaltern ranks, have the misfortune to be considered as gentlemen; which in England, as in other countries, implies a denomination of persons, who from the accidental circumstance of office, or property, are divided from the common herd of mankind, and are obliged to form a barrier between these two orders, (as there is none in nature,) by the luxuries of dress, equipage, and attendance; but as the superfluities of life are the only props to this order of society, it is evident how distressing it must be to be installed in it, unfurnished with the very articles to which it owes its existence. The vulgar must be paid for the superiority assumed by their betters; the advan-

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tages which they receive from the circulation of superabundancies, is the only charter men have for respect in a free country; and whenever that is wanting, the jealousy, and independent spirit of the multitude drags them to a level. When the journeyman taylor, weaver, or any common mechanic, can live on his wages more respectably than the officer in the army; the scarlet and embroidery lose their lustre, and become the derision of the dregs of the people.

An English officer, in the opinion of the multitude, bears the same proportion to a gentleman, as a poor knight of Windsor does to a companion of the order of the garter.

The situation of an officer whose services have not been rewarded by promotion, is truly deplorable. Often thrown behind in his circumstances by unavoidable expences, incompatible
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with his finances, and his income at the same time so small, that the most rigid self-denial cannot allot a part for accumulation: his misery is irrevocable, and the most slight misfortune, or imprudence is ruin: he must either shut himself up from happiness and society, or involve himself deeper; he must either fret away his life in the hectic of sensibility, or pine in the gloom of despair. If, by uncommon circumspection, he avoids this Scylla and Charybdis of poverty, he may exist, but cannot be said to live: no recreation in the walk of a gentleman is within his compass; in the mean time, years and infirmities creep on apace, with the chagrining retrospect of a youth spent without pleasure, and without profit, and the dismal prospect of an old age of want and obscurity.

I appeal to all officers who have no private property, and who consequently have not been promoted, whether or not I have drawn a faithful portrait of the profession?

The private foldier in his line, has the fame comparative sufferings, and mortifications with the officer; if the painful feelings which are only the taxes on refined manners, are not his portion, they are made up in the real wants and sufferings of animal nature. From the eight pence per day, which is issued for the pay of the foldier, when the deductions are made, for cloathing, for necessaries, for washing, for the pay-master, for the surgeon, and the multiplied articles of useless and unmilitary fopperies, (introduced by many colonels, to the oppression of the foldier, for what they call the credit and appearance of the regiment;) there is not a suffi-

sufficient overplus for healthful subsistence, under the most salutary regulations: and as to the little enjoyments and recreations, which even the meanest rank of men can call their own in any country, the brave, the honourable, the veteran soldier, must not aspire to. Yet in those men, we expect romantic spirit, heroic fortitude, point of honour, and the love of their country; principles which can but feebly exist, when the body is reduced from monastic abstinence, and the ardour of the mind is broken with neglect and oppression. The characters, and capabilities of men, are not only influenced, but absolutely changed from circumstance and situation; they neither depend totally on the mind, or on the body, but on their mutual operation on each other, as they are differently actuated. There is nearly as much mechanism in our

rational exertions, as in the instinct of animals; and foldiers may be as much formed by art to undaunted enterprise, or sunk into cowards from the want of it, as horses may be trained to rush upon fixed bayonets, or be scared so as to start at their shadows.

Butcher's meat and bread, are at present four times the prices they were when the pay was first established; and every absolute necessity of life in the same proportion, from the decrease of the value of money, the extensive commerce, and riches of the kingdom, and the great taxes which have since been laid on every article of universal consumption. A shilling and eighteen pence per day is now the common rate of labour: mechanics and journeymen, tradesmen of all denominations, exact at least two shillings and half a crown from their employ-

ers ; and so inadequate are even these additional prices to the expences of living, that population decreases, and the kingdom is emaciated by continual and alarming emigrations. As luxury stalks on with more progressive strides, the wants of mankind are multiplied ; they, in consequence, refuse their labour, till these new wants are supplied ; well knowing that the different necessaries, and luxuries of life, to which their labour is directed, cannot stand still, but must wait on their nod : this change is not prejudicial to their employers, who charge it, with interest, on manufactures and commodities, which they sell reciprocally to each other, and to land-holders ; which last, to supply the deficiencies and the calls of new luxuries, raise their farms, and put them into the hands of opulent monopolizers : these, uniformly attached

to a higher key ; what must be the lot

to their own interests, make up, in their turns, for the extraordinary rents, and the increased expence of cultivation, and utensils, by raising the corn to exorbitant prices, which, when the poor are unable to purchase, they transport to foreign countries, notwithstanding the constant laws which pass to prevent them.

In this active and mutable scene, in this fermentation of commerce, amidst the innumerable inventions and chicanery of men, to evade poverty, and to acquire riches, whilst the natural progress of society is fabricating continual changes, and these changes have obliged men of all denominations to fall into new channels of operation; in this long chain of human necessities which have increased and fattened on each other, still rising, but rising in equable proportions, (as a tune is still the same, though played on a higher key;) what must be the lot
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of one link which sticks fast in so rapid a wheel? Like a ship which is aground in a tempest, it must be speedily destroyed. To say that this is unfortunately the case of the British army, is not to have discovered a wonderful enigma; it is indeed the stranded and dismasted hulk, who, while the fleet around, with the use of sails and rudders, fight safely against the tumultuous conflict, is dashed against the rocks into ten thousand pieces.

But these circumstances are not alone shamefully unjust, and oppressive of a most valuable part of the community; they may be traced further in their consequences, and may easily be proved to be as highly impolitical, as hurtful to the state, beside being totally destructive of the army.

Whenever, from a want of due distribution of national advantage, any portion of the community does not receive

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its equitable dividend, all zeal for the public good must necessarily languish in that quarter; for personal advantages, and valuable privileges, are the sources of the most refined and rational patriotism. The more important then and extensive this portion is, which is thus cut off from the main body by unjust and fraudulent deprivation, the more the state suffers in its interests: if the commercial branch is clogged with oppressive monopolies, prohibitions, and taxations, trade decays, and the consequence is poverty. If the military body is held in disrepute, its establishments measured out by the narrow hand of ungenerous œconomy, and the wreath of honour made subservient to corruption, the power of a state is weakened from the apostacy of its defenders; and thus a kingdom may languish into poverty, or be overwhelmed in conquest. The latter

latter consequence is immediately in point, and deserves a serious discussion.

From the miserable establishment of pay, the expences of military parade, and the impossibility of rising without parliamentary interest, the number of officers, who embrace the army seriously as a profession, daily decreases, and those who still do, remain for the most part in the subaltern ranks, and are never heard of: those who succeed in it, are in general cadets of opulent families, and sometimes persons of great wealth, and landed property; but I appeal to the army, and to the nation, if these men often deserve the honourable title of soldiers? A commission, and a tour through Italy, are the finishing strokes to modern education; they are undertaken with the same serious intention, and are prosecuted with equal improvement.

So long as the battalions are encamped on native plains, or immured in peaceful barracks, so long those sons of riot and effeminacy maintain their posts. The brilliant orbit of Ranelagh glows with their scarlet, and the avenues of Vauxhall glitter with blades drawn against unarmed apprentices in honour of a strumpet, which rust in their scabbards when their country calls: if for a review, or a muster, they are obliged to loll in their vis-à-vis to the quarters of their regiment, it is but to enflame the contempt and hatred of the people of England against the defenders of their peaceable privileges. They gallop again to town, after having filled the country with such horror at their dishonourable debaucheries, that hospitable doors are shut against officers of principle and reputation.

Such are the advantages which the military profession reaps from these apes in embroidery ; such are the heroes, that in the event of a war, must lead the British troops to battle : for these men rise almost universally over the heads of officers grey with fatigues, and rough with scars, whose courage and abilities yet preserve the honour of the English name ; who, without money, and without interest, languish in the subaltern ranks, unknown and unrespected, who hardly live under the throbbings of hearts, wounded from sensibility, and broken with disappointment ; and after having braved all the terrors and calamities of war, and immortalized their country, sink, themselves, into obscure graves, unwept, and unremembered, without a tongue to speak their worth, or a stone to record their virtues.

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In time of peace, those evils are still more severe ; for in war, not only the sword cuts itself a passage to preferment, but those high born, and rich competitors leave the field when it is stained with blood. But how many regiments are continually languishing in our baneful colonies ? How many officers of courage, and experience, are sinking under the rage of unremitting skies, without the rewards of their service, mean and inadequate as they are ?

No sooner does the news of a death, by the sword, or by the elements, arrive in England, than the levee rooms shine with cosmetic complections, and unfullied scarlet ; the votes of their kindred are weighed in the ministerial balance, and the parchment is deposited in the sinking scale. The sacred mouths of bleeding wounds, and the memorials of faithful service,
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are but silent and unavailing reproaches ; they plead in vain, when there are no hearts to receive their impressions ; they are distant, and are neglected ; they are past, and are forgotten.

It is only upon the useful and valuable part of the army that all its grievances fall. To the stripling of the peaceable parade, it is the limbo of vanity ; to the veteran of the field, it is a path sown with thorns. The gay young ensign, with support and interest, is like a vessel in port, sleeping on the peaceful bosom of the waters, and flaunting with her streamers ; the old and neglected officer is the dismasted hulk, driving with the blast, and fighting with the billows.

After a ten years peace the very ideas of service are obliterated ; the survivors of the war are mostly retired to obscure corners, where luxury
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has not yet spread her latest banners, where their pay will still supply the cravings of nature, and cover their nakedness ; those that remain, without money, or interest, having the mortification to be commanded by boys whom they have seen at the breast, lose all their military ardour, and retire at last, disgusted by constant disappointment ; serving as beacons to the wise, to shun entering the lists for a country, where contempt and sorrow are the prizes.

Their places in the army are supplied by persons of two denominations : the first, as I have already observed, do not often embrace it as a profession, but fly to it as a refuge from idleness, or oftener as a sanction for it ; instead of accomplishing themselves in the sciences which form the basis of the military art, they consume their time in the fashionable debaucheries,

debaucheries, and a few years course enervates their minds, and enfeebles their bodies, so as to render them totally unfit for the duties of their profession, which, however lightly considered from such humble representatives, demands the exertion of the rarest and most consummate abilities, seldom liberally bestowed by nature, and still seldomer perfected by study.

The second denomination of officers are such as have little or no dependence but on the army, who have received, or purchased their first commission, and who, as the younger sons of noblemen, (do not chuse to kiss the b—ch of a minister,) of gentlemen, or of persons in trade, have perhaps two thousand pounds for their patrimony, which, in process of time, is sunk for the purchase of a company; *and there the prospect stops.* For without both money and interest,

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(and often the first, though supported by long service, will not do,) there is now rarely any instance of further preferment. So that those men who seriously attach themselves to the military profession, have seldom an opportunity of distinguishing themselves, or of serving effectually their country ; they are almost universally commanded by men of the first mentioned class, who are not in general foldiers in spirit, principle, or capacity. Military preferments, like other important trusts, are now merely disposed of as annuities, by that Gorgon of corruption, stiled parliamentary interest, and come into the long list of jobs, which swallow up every thing that is decent, or honourable.

The guards deserve a place here, as finishing the climax of oppression and abuse. I do not mean to draw any

any low invidious parallels between the soldiers of the court, and the camp, or to examine into their comparative deserts. There are many officers in the guards, who would do honour to any military corps: but I must attack the institution as injurious, and unjust. The superior rank which the guards have over the line, cannot be defended on any principle of military policy.

To give an additional lustre to the appendages of royalty, is not only proper, but necessary; men in all degrees, being equal in capacity and frailty, the dignity of power and government must be glossed over with every varnish which serves to dazzle the optics of the multitude: a king should never throw off the purple, or unbind the jewels from his brow. The painted roof, the gilded equipage, the grove of white and yellow sticks,

the rainbow of ribbands, and the firmament of stars, have all their origin in use. The dignity of royal attendance is authorized by the custom of all nations. Let the lieutenants of the guards then be captains, and let the captains be colonels, nay generals, or field marshals if they please; but let them be a distinct body from the line of the marching army; and as their duties are entirely different, let their rewards not clash with each other: let not the safe filken service of a court, however honourable, supersede the hazardous and laborious duties of the camp.

The rise in the guards is so rapid, from the suppression of the ranks of lieutenant, and major, that the officers of the line have always the mortification to find, after long and painful service, a body of men, nursed in the bosom of peace, who supersede them
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in their profession, and claim, from absolute military rank, and seniority, most of the elevated posts in the army. And while they are braving all the hostile elements, where our commerce calls for protection; while they are suffering the disappointments and retardments already enumerated, from the superior interests of many members of their own body; when time and patience have at last removed these obstacles, and the road seems smooth towards a regiment, an innundation of captains in the guards, who, (whatever may be their genius or merit, have had no opportunities of acquiring military skill, and who can have no reasonable claim to promotion in the line,) by dint of court rank, and etiquette of precedency, step in between, defeat all the prospects of the actual foldier, and trample upon a life of dangers,

dangers, fatigues, and important service to the public.

Besides all the hardships and injustices already touched upon, there seems to be a total want of art and policy in the government of the army. Honour being the very aliment of a foldier, all wise nations have annexed particular rewards to military merit, and service; which though not intrinsic, and consequently not burthensome to the state, have yet roused and supported a greater heroic spirit among troops, than the richest treasury could effect. There is no shadow of this sensible policy in Great Britain; and the cause generally assigned for this neglect is, that we are a commercial nation, a free people, and that these baits for military emulation can only be made respectable in despotic and monarchical governments, by the sole will of the prince. But this objection

tion is almost too absurd to demand a refutation. Merit, real, or supposed, of all kinds, is rewarded in England, by the orders of knighthood; and those distinctions, though not intrinsic, and though rendered in some measure contemptible from the most unworthy prostitutions, are yet objects of greater and more universal ambition, than higher dignities, and more substantial gratifications. Why are there then no public testimonies of merit for the soldier? The order of the Bath it is true was instituted for this purpose, (as in fact all orders originally were,) and its sword should never be girt but on the warrior; but this rule is not adhered to. His majesty has indeed lately invested several most respectable companions; Sir Eyre Coote, Sir John Lindsay, Sir Robert Keith, Sir Adolphus Oughton, reflect great honour on the order:

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Sir Edward Hawke, Sir Jeffrey Amherst, Sir Charles Saunders, and Sir George Pococke, are a group that render it sacred. But the distinction is lessened by misapplication; is sullied, and tarnished by corruption. The petty envoys at the secondary courts, (who are little better than gentlemen ushers to English fools, who squander their fortunes in foreign countries,) like the jay in the fable, are adorned with this wreath of the soldier; Lord ***** carries it about with him to the stews; and a West India sugar-planter glitters among his hogheads and his negroes with a star which should only beam upon the hero's breast.

But were even all the stalls of this military order properly filled, something more is wanting; some nearer and more general object of emulation; something which tells the public that

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the wearer has devoted himself so long to the service of his country, and that merit has distinguished his service. Nothing is so dear to a worthy breast as honest fame: an iron badge of glory is a greater prize to a soldier than an ingot of gold; it is an absolute talisman, which inspires heroism, and creates honour; and, so long as it remains uncorrupted, it is, in my mind, though on the breast of a private centinel, a nobler, a more respectable, a more enviable trophy, than the irradiated star on a titled and a pensioned slave.

It was sentiments like these that raised the Romans to universal empire, and could they happily have preserved them, and resisted the allurements of luxury, the Goths might still have inhabited the deserts of the North, and Rome might have yet been the mistress of the world. But in governments where corruption has

made any great strides, there can be no rewards devised, or instituted, for military, or any other species of merit; because the very sources of honour are contaminated: what lustre can it reflect on a man of worth, and character, to arrive at a distinction, which money, or ancestry can obtain for a coward, or a slave?

A military order, like the Croix de St. Louis, which only marks out the years, and not the reputation of service, is (though very inferior in its uses to an order of merit,) unhappily the only species of military dignity which could take place with any success in Great Britain. The latter would only swell the already boundless current of corruption, "*Omnia venalia, omnia exeunt in lucrum.*"

A critical vote to turn the scale in the senate would instal a hero; a marriage with a lord's whore, or a perjury at a contested election, would

soon overtop the storm of a breach, or the taking of a battery.

The high improvement, and good footing of the army, is nevertheless too universally the language of unthinking officers; the changes in the cloathing, the new cock of a hat, a better fancy for the cut of a lapel, or the numeration of a button, have charms for many minds sufficient to efface the dreadful neglect of men who have bled, and whose fathers have died for their country; and to cast a shade over abuses, neglects, and oppressions of the soldier, which make the army daily degenerate into a wretched banditti, escaped from goals, and returned from transportation, without the enthusiasm of their profession, the spirit to brave its dangers, or the strength to support its fatigues. I will venture to pronounce, that on its present footing, none but idle worthless

scoundrels would present themselves in the event of a war; and little dependence is to be had on men who are constrained to serve against their inclinations, and whose education and manners are incompatible with the service.

The evils then, are I think sufficiently proved, and too grievously felt, particularly that of the pay, which is a leading cause of the rest; the question alone is, how it must be rectified? Here men generally stop, from a lamentable defect in the human character: the words which Solomon puts into the mouth of the slothful, are almost the universal language of mankind, when their necessities prompt them to dubious undertakings. "There is a lion in the way, and I shall be slain in the streets." This puerile despondency is the bane both of societies, and individuals, but more eminently

eminently of the first; for that the united business of every body, is the business of nobody, is true even to a proverb. Each man says within himself, what can I do alone in this affair? Their sickly imaginations present magnified and multiplied difficulties; and thus they content themselves with grumbling and groaning under burthens, without trying to shake them off.

It should always be remembered, that few permanent and capital advantages have ever accrued to society, from the first effort of one individual; that few ample victories have been gained, without many previous defeats, and new risings to the charge. In the progress of learning, the most simple and manifest truths have, at first, only been supposed possible, by romantic imaginations; and in political life, the steps to civilization have been slow and wearisome, clogged with
painful

painful impediments, and often overwhelmed in tumultuous destruction; yet begun again with vigour, and executed with patience, have been crowned with success. The radiant path of liberty has been sown with thorns, and involved in terrors, and darkness; by what painful and unremitting toils our illustrious forefathers have weeded it for their children, without even the reasonable hope of success to sweeten their labours, ought to be a theme of rejoicing and emulation for us.

On these principles I reason, and on these principles I write; I do not flatter myself that my puny labour will awaken attention, or obtain redress, yet if it animates but one individual of brighter and more cultivated talents, and of more general influence, the flame in time may catch, and the work at last may be done.

If even that good fortune should be wanting, I shall, at least, have the satisfaction of throwing in my mite to the good of the society, of which I think it my greatest honour to be a member: nothing can ravish from me the more refined pleasure of pleading the cause of many brave, worthy, neglected men, who have deserved nobly of their country, whose distresses are a stain on the national character, and whose private worth and amiable qualities have endeared many of them to myself.

The general election* is now just at hand; corruption is sometimes a septennial plant, whose seeds, shaken periodically, with the assistance of golden plough-shares, prepare the land for a new crop. Every manure which the

* The reader will easily perceive from the above paragraph, and consequent reasoning, that this pamphlet was written under an idea that the late parliament would not be dissolved till the usual time; he will therefore necessarily make the allowance for the author here speaking in the present tense.

filth of vice can engender, is then laid to the root of this baleful cultivation. The people of England, perhaps, are preparing once more to give a seven years lease of their rights and liberties to the highest bidders; if so, I for one, shall heartily laugh at their impudent clamours, when I hear of their future grievances. He that purchases at the price of *money*, has a right to be paid again *in kind*; and it is a mockery of common sense in the *corrupted*, to expect either virtue or protection at the hands of their *corruptors*.

But as it is impossible for a few to stem a powerful and confirmed torrent, let us at least be wise for ourselves. Let us not be the only fools in the community. The army possesses a very considerable interest in different parts of England, from the fortune, the birth, and connections of many of its members. Let us husband that interest for our own advantage.

rage. Alas, every man does so for his own as an individual, but no one thinks of the community. Public spirit has breathed its last among us. Its very name is only to be found in old Greek and Latin books, which very few can now read. If officers will only use their influence for their own particular promotions, and neglect every honourable attempt for the good of their body, little can be expected from any combination of the rest. For the misfortune is, that none of the grievances, or abuses complained of, affect that part of the army, whose complaints would have any weight in the senate of the nation : as it is not the force of truth or justice, but the power and influence of property, that moves the political springs.

There are, however, among us a respectable few who are an honour to

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their high rank, and a credit to their profession; who, in the midst of affluence, can feel for the distresses of their fellow-foldiers, and the dignity of the army. From these men much may be hoped; their influence in matters of election, and the immediate voice of many of them in the house of commons, would put the business on a serious and respectable footing, and from the unanimity, firmness, and well regulated spirit of the rest, much might be reasonably expected.

First then, let every officer in the whole body of the army, who has vote, or influence, in the senatorial election of Great Britain, refuse that vote, or interest, to any person, however nearly connected by blood, alliance, dependence, or expectation, unless he binds himself on the most solemn obligations of a man of honour, to forward by his vote
and

and by arguments, if a speaker, such petition of the army for an augmentation of the pay, as may be presented to the house, while he is a member of it. Or if their votes and influence are already engaged, let them demand from the representative, as a point of honour, and the right of a constituent, what it is too late to insist upon as a stipulation.

Secondly, let officers of all ranks, not only in Great Britain and Ireland, but in the colonies and foreign garrisons, subscribe their names to the following memorial, or any other that may be adopted on maturer consideration. This is what every officer owes to the military community, and what not one can refuse, without exposing himself to the contempt and resentment of his corps; for I may venture to affirm, that, in most regiments

in the service, a very great majority would subscribe to any honourable plan for a moderate and equitable augmentation. Let the subscriptions then, when completed, be sent to the agents of the respective regiments, and let a committee be appointed for collecting them together, in order to be presented to the legislature.

Thirdly. Previous to the presenting this memorial to parliament, the throne should be propitiated; for although, in the spirit of the constitution, we are the servants of the nation, yet it is a necessary military tenet to consider ourselves as the more immediate servants of the crown: we receive our commissions from royal authority, and bind ourselves by accepting them, to obedience, which the laws do not prescribe to other subjects. Besides, we have just reason to build
great

great expectations on the king's humanity, and justice, and the great affection he has ever displayed for his army. The annexed memorial then, should be signed in the same manner as the other, and be presented to his majesty, by some officer of distinction, in the name of the whole; and let the event be dutifully and patiently expected.

A transaction of so serious and urgent a complection, could never be neglected by the king, or flurred over by parliament. The affair would come formally and seriously before the house, and we should at least hear what arguments they could bring to sustain the propriety of the shameful abuses complained of; and why one of the most honourable, and most useful parts of the community should be cut off from all the advantages which British subjects derive from the
riches

riches and prosperity of the nation. They would tell us at least, from what political principle it is necessary, that the people should labour under grievous taxes, for the amassing of astonishing sums, to be employed as the wages of infamy and corruption; for the luxuries of men who are dead weights about the neck of their country, receiving great annuities under the sanction of holding offices which are multiplied scandalously and needlessly, to serve the purposes of corrupt and selfish mistifiers*; they will prove to us at least the equity and necessity of these establishments; they will no doubt give us ample reasons why the civil list is so immensely out of proportion to the military funds; and why every clerk in a paltry public of-

* I speak of the routine of the times, and do not apply to any individuals.

fice should be enabled to keep his *fille*, and drink claret at the nation's expence; while the officers of the army can hardly subsist, and the soldiers are actually starving.

We might further on our parts, with submission, desire to ask for information and instruction, whether it is necessary that every chancellor, secretary, or other great officer of state should retire on pensions of three and four thousand pounds per annum, with reversions to the third and fourth generations; and that all persons in the civil departments of government should be gratified with ten times the sum adequate to the importance of the trusts? and whether such sums combined together, with many other deductions from the hoards of corruption, would not be sufficient to redress the grievances of the army, without further burthen on the nation?

tion? Whether an able financier, with the rare talents of honesty, and public spirit, might not make such equitable division of what the people pay to government, so as that the establishment of the army might bear some decent proportion to the change of times, and to civil appointments of the same importance to the public.

However these points might be glossed over with parliamentary rhetoric, or their impossibilities exposed from the hackneyed routine of subsidiary calculation; however they might be beheld as presumptive questions to be proposed to the supreme body of the legislature, yet if their truth shone abroad on the unprejudiced part of the nation, if the voice of reason and of justice answered them in our favour, if unanimity reigned among us, if we were not deficient in that spirit which ought to be the first gem in
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the composition of soldiers, I will be bold to say, that without any mutinous or unconstitutional proceedings, which I hope no person will suppose me either to counsel, or insinuate, our solicitations would shortly be crowned with success.

But to effect this, the system proposed must be unanimously adopted. Petitions to a secretary at war, or even to a commander in chief, are not only beneath our dignity, on such important occasions, but, on the present political system, would be like praying to images, and wooden gods, who cannot help us.

One individual, who, whatever his ostensible office may be, is sometimes styled the minister, who, like Aaron's rod, swallows up all other rods; and the numerous departments of state, whose various businesses and interests it is impossible he should adequately know, be-

come the subordinate engines of his ambition, and are all made subservient to one great plan of self-preservation in office. His scheme being thus, to maintain, rather than to fulfill his station, the power and property, not the capacities and merits of men, must consequently be the objects of his scrutiny and favour; and when a rivalry becomes critical, and the rotten fabric begins to totter, no decorum, regularity, or consistency is any longer preserved: orders are issued to the heads of the different departments for the most preposterous promotions; they must be indiscriminately obeyed, or the secondary ministers instantly make way for creatures of the first; it is in vain for the oppressed to remonstrate with the nominal rulers of the several lines; a peremptory and decisive blow is prepared for remonstrance and complaint; they are told (and

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what

what other answer can the most upright man give who is not independent) that it is the king's pleasure; although he is rarely, and never honestly consulted on many disgraceful occasions. His majesty has ever manifested the greatest justice, and the most amiable humanity, when the cry of oppressed merit has happened to reach the throne; but alas! its avenues are so blocked up by the dragons and harpies of state, that her low and modest voice is seldom heard.

It is much to be lamented, that this absurd and ruinous struggle for administration should thus trample upon the fundamental principles of reason and policy. So long as it exists, it is impossible that vigour and good order should be found in any, but more especially in the military department; where, if merit and capacity are obliged to stoop to the un-

manly intrigue and venality of a court, *an army is like a lion without teeth or claws.* No reformation can be reasonably hoped for, till the ministers for war are made independent of the civil statesman, at least in the establishment, formation, and disposition of troops, and the universal and uncontrouled disposal of military trusts; no good can be expected, till a commander in chief is chosen by the sovereign, on the sole consideration of his military and moral character, never to be dictated to, or removed by a minister; (and a prince of the blood, of good dispositions, is much to be preferred, in a government like ours, to the most favourite subject.) Thus set aloof from all political connections and temptations, he could have no guide but the balance of justice, and could never degenerate into a broker of commissions, or be betrayed

betrayed into public breaches of faith and decency, such as I have formerly beheld, rather with pity than resentment, when elections and party-rage have triumphed over the most feeling heart, and the most honest and amiable dispositions.

These solecisms in government are however now become so familiar, that to the complaints of such general abuses, and the grievances of deserving individuals, there is one general answer given. "The constitution, we are told, does not always admit of merits being impartially rewarded, by even the justice of the sovereign. That he too is hemmed in by political obligations, to which he must often sacrifice even his own pleasure, and his opinion of right. That what the king, in the goodness of his heart, would bestow on meritorious service, the minister has already promised

mised in his master's name, to carry
 on his own selfish politics, which is
 dignified with the name of the k—'s
 business; and every honest man who
 refuses to fall down before the golden
 calf, is set forth in odious colours,
 and is represented to his f——n as a
 dangerous and alienated subject."
 These are indeed truths, melancholy
 and disgraceful truths, but they can-
 not be charged on the constitution.
 The system of British government is
 the most sublime fabric of human
 wisdom and virtue which the annals
 of the world can produce; the devia-
 tion from its spirit and purity is the
 most awful monument of the folly
 and infamy of men.

A k—g of G——t B——n, in the
 true spirit of the constitution, may,
 through the medium of the laws, en-
 courage virtue, and distribute impar-
 tial justice, more especially among that
 portion

portion of his subjects over whom the royal prerogative has given him the sole and arbitrary command. Contented with that portion of power with which the laws invest him, he need never entangle himself in labyrinths of policy, and contentions of interests, which pervert the administration of justice, and sully the sacred lustre of the crown. His best charter being written in the hearts of his faithful people, the cabals of a minister would be unnecessary to carry on the business of the nation, equally interesting and important to the whole. The cry of Jealousy and Faction, which, from the nature of man, can never be perfectly hushed, would be drowned in the louder voice of Reason and Concord; Merit would walk boldly to the throne to receive her wreath, and Vice, ashamed to shew her spotted face, would hide herself in obscurity.

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It is under such a government that the army would indeed be a respectable body, an honourable and an eligible profession.

There is nothing in the character of our most excellent k—g repugnant to the fulfillment of this political portrait; on the contrary, I believe it to be the epitome of his wishes; but to carry it into perfect execution, much must be done, and much more be undone; much must be changed, which none but God can change, and which, in the order of his Providence, and his disposition of human affairs, (if we may be allowed to reason from analogy) will almost certainly not happen.

The nation is ripening fast for the inexorable fickle of Time, which moves progressively over the face of the earth, gathers the nations, and casts them into obscurity, for future, and perhaps

perhaps brighter renovations. Liberty already sits on the western cliffs of Albion, pruning her wing for the vast flight of the Atlantic, beyond whose foam her infant sons are stretching forth their eager arms to embrace her. From thence she may move on like the sun in his course, illuminate still unknown nations, and return again to those in the shadow of darkness. These changes however will not probably happen in our times; and soldiers having fewer and less fixed posterity than others, need not extend their prospects so far: "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." Enough for us to be wise for ourselves, to live in honour, and in plenty, and to die with glory,

perhaps brighter renovations. It
 berry already has on the western cliffs
 of Alaska, pointing her wing for the
 vast light of the Atlantic beyond
 whose foam her infant sons are
 stretching forth their eager arms to
 embrace her. From thence the may
 move on like the sun in his course, if
 tomorrow will answer nations, and
 return again to those in the shadow of
 darkness. These changes however
 will not probably happen in our
 times, and soldiers having fewer and
 less fixed property than others, need
 not extend their prospects so far.
 A gentleman for the day is the evil
 angel. Enough for us to be
 wise for ourselves, to live in honour,
 and in plenty, and to die with glory.

FORM of a PETITION

TO THE

H—E of C—N S.

To the Honourable the C—NS of
G—T B—N in P—T assembled:

The humble Petition of the Officers
of the Army whose Names are
hereunto subscribed,

WHEN we reflect on the great
debt in which the nation is
involved, from the necessary expences
of the late glorious war, the vast sums
annually levied on the people for the
purposes of government, and the
heavy taxes which are, in consequence,
laid on every article of universal con-
sumption,

sumption, it is with the strongest reluctance that we offer any claim tending the most distantly to encrease or aggravate these evils. We have so deeply at heart the welfare and prosperity of our country, that great as our hardships are, they would be entirely absorbed, and suffered as a willing sacrifice to the general happiness: and it is only in the hope and belief that their removal may not be incompatible with the public good, that we humbly submit our situation to your serious consideration.

The great riches, which, from the extension of commerce and conquest have flowed in upon Great Britain from so many sources, the consequential decrease of the value of money, the progress of luxury, with many other co-operating causes, have so entirely changed the system of things since the first establishment of the pay;

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the prices of all the absolute necessities of life have augmented in so prodigious a ratio; so many new wants have arisen, by custom confirmed into necessities, that what was originally granted by the nation, as a proper independence to support the dignity of the army, is now absolutely incompatible with the fulfilment of such intention, in all the military degrees under a regiment; and is in the subaltern ranks altogether inadequate to the single article of subsistence, independent of the many expences unavoidably incurred, in compliance with the regulations of military parade, without which an army cannot exist.

The truth of these circumstances is of such public notoriety, that we think it unnecessary to enlarge upon them, more especially before this august assembly, where every individual

dual must be perfectly acquainted with points which so nearly concern the public welfare.

We cannot help seeing with chagrin, and mortification, that the salaries of all the servants of the nation in civil trusts, the emoluments of every species of public business, have, in some measure, kept pace with the changes of the times, (the army alone excepted;) and that in consequence of such distribution, there is no equable proportion observed between civil and military trusts, of equivalent importance to the state; vast sums being annually appropriated to the support of the holders of the former in all the luxuries of life, while the latter are suffering all the rigours of necessity and poverty.

As we consider ourselves as a very respectable branch of the people, whose stewards you are, we think ourselves
fully

fully justified, in offering, with submission, these points to your serious and immediate attention, and in praying for relief with respect to our pay, which the rapid progression of the circumstances, already enumerated, renders every day more urgent, and which cannot be much longer neglected, without the disaffection and total ruin of the army.

We pray that our legal and dutiful petition may not be considered as the remonstrance of a mercenary body, who, knowing their own use and importance, would raise their prices according to the complexion of the times; we are honourable volunteers in the service of a free country, to which we would as cheerfully sacrifice our fortunes as our lives; but as the most numerous, and most important part of us, the

real soldiers of the army, have no resources in private property, we are obliged to ask such support from the nation, to whose defence and independence we dedicate ourselves, as may enable us to perform the duties we owe her, with a dignity suitable to the rank in which we are placed by our king, and the relation in which we stand to the state.

But in what manner, and in what proportion these our humble wishes may be best effected, we submit entirely to the wisdom, the humanity, and the justice of parliament.

It is the absolute sting of necessity, and not any mutinous, or illegal spirit, which dictates this plain and pointed memorial. We are deeply impressed with the sense of the sacred ties which link men together under the authority of laws, and we pray
that

that the unfettered language of truth, may not be mistaken for the gauntlet of defiance, which we never can throw down but to the enemies of our country.

Signed

W. H. H. any civil order of the community is opposed, or neglected, they must (though under the protection of the foreign) have recourse to the laws. In the laws are defective, they cannot hope for redress, but in the proclamation of the laws or not infusions; and the

FORM

FORM of a PETITION

TO THE

K — — — G,

To the K — — — G's Most Excellent M —
 — — — Y : The humble Petition of the
 Officers of the Army whose Names
 are hereunto subscribed.

S I R E,

WHEN any civil order of the
 community is oppressed, or
 neglected, they must (though under
 the protection of the sovereign,) have
 recourse to the laws. If the laws are
 defective, they cannot hope for re-
 dress, but in the procrastination of
 amendments or new institutions ; and
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the private subject in the best regulated governments must often suffer by the delays inseparable from the execution of civil justice:

It is the peculiar privilege of military bodies, to look immediately up to the source of power, and it is the particular happiness of the British army that this source, in the sacred person of your Majesty, is likewise the unfulled source of justice. In-
 somuch that we cannot even reflect with regret on the immunities of freedom which the civil subjects of Great Britain so amply possess, and which we as soldiers in many points forego, when we consider that of the code to which our lives and our honours are subjected, your Majesty is the sole and ultimate judge, in whose royal breast we can repose our nearest concerns, as in the bosom of a father.

The great changes which these kingdoms, and indeed all Europe, have undergone since your Majesty's royal ancestors fixed the establishment of the army of Great Britain, have extended themselves equably and proportionally; the value of lands, the rates of labour, the profits of manufactures, the prices of commodities, and the salaries of persons in civil trusts, public or private, have all kept pace with the decrease of the value of money, occasioned by commerce and conquest. The luxuries of the age have been a spur to industry and invention; have rewarded and encouraged the arts, and have been an ample source of riches and improvement. The system of life has been gradually and uniformly elevated to a greater scale, from the natural progress of society, and has left the army singly behind it in its pristine

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condition, as a solitary, and melancholy standard of those changes. Subjecting it to defray (with the humble funds allotted in an age when the treasuries of monarchs did not always amount to the riches of many of your Majesty's private subjects,) all the expences which the habits of luxury have confirmed into necessities, when even the most simple and indispensable demands of life, are not from the above mentioned changes within the compass of its establishment.

The great expences in which the late glorious war involved Great Britain, has long withheld us from intruding these our distresses on the attention of your Majesty, and the nation. A thirteen years state of tranquillity and commerce now emboldens us to declare them at the
foot

foot of the throne, and before the assembly of the people.

We are so well assured of your Majesty's good dispositions towards your faithful and affectionate army, that we would willingly rely singly on them upon this occasion ; but as the forms of the constitution invest the people's representatives with the sole right of levying the necessary supplies for the support of government, we have framed a memorial to be delivered to them, assembled in parliament, demanding, as a collective body, that equitable dividend of the public funds, which our use and importance to the nation entitle us to expect. In order by these means to shew, that it is not your Majesty who would burthen your subjects in general, for an additional support of your more immediate servants ; but that we, as

the defenders of the state, as well as the protectors of the throne ; as the guardians of the people, as well as the ministers of the crown ; as a part of the community, laboriously devoted to the safety and independence of the whole—do of ourselves call upon the nation for that support which her riches, procured by the success of our arms, in the protection of her commerce, enable her to afford ; and which the changes such riches have produced, have rendered indispensably necessary for the existence of the army.

As a body ourselves of the people, we have thus adjudged it to be our right to speak our minds freely, but respectfully, to their representatives ; to your Majesty we address ourselves with the humility of servants, and with the affection of children. Sentiments which arise not only from
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the duty we owe to the King whom it has pleased the Almighty to appoint to rule over us ; but from those princely virtues, and that benevolence of character, which temper the austerity of power with the mildness of humanity ; and which unite in our hearts a love for the man, with a veneration for the sovereign.

Signed



F I N I S.

